

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 304.—VOL. VI.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1889.

PRICE 1½d.

AN ISLE OF FARTHEST THULE.

PAPA STOUR.

IF you have ever sailed round the west coast of Shetland, you will know that on the north-western extremity of the Mainland, beyond Sandness and beyond the Ness of Melby, there lies the solitary island of Papa Stour. It is not large, being only about two miles in breadth and three in length; and is separated from the Mainland by a strait a little over a mile in width, called Papa Sound. But though the island lies thus close to the Mainland, it is not always easy of approach; for the tides that flow through the Sound are swift and furious, and frequently in certain states of the weather render passage impossible. The name of the island, to strangers, is peculiar. Papa is not an uncommon place-name either in Shetland or the Orkneys, and is said to have been the Icelandic name for the first missionaries who brought Christianity to those islands. Be this as it may, the word Stour means 'big'; so that Papa Stour (pronounced *Pah'-pa Stoor*) is simply Big Papa, to distinguish it from the island of Papa Little, lying about ten miles farther east. Papa Stour is not often visited by the tourist, as it lies out of the conventional tourist-tracks, and is not conveniently accessible; yet the wonderful rock scenery of its western coast is well worth seeing.

Our first visit was made by way of Olna Firth, Swarbacks Minn, and St Magnus Bay, a distance of about sixteen miles; a second and longer visit by crossing Papa Sound. With a favourable breeze the distance by the former route may be covered in two or three hours; but when it is necessary to beat up against a head-wind it may take seven or eight. Yet in sailing through the blue waters and among the green islands of the western Mainland, there is an infinite variety of interest, so numerous are the sea-fowl that crowd these narrow inland voes, or sweep in long and graceful curves round the flapping sails. Groups of 'teisties' or guillemots are seldom absent, carry-

ing out their quick evolutions on the surface of the water, dipping and diving and re-appearing with tireless activity; and when on the wing, displaying their glossy plumage of white and black, with their little web-feet of the brightest vermillion, which look, at first sight, like two red tail-feathers. Or it may be a family of eider ducks following each other in line about the quiet shallows near the shore; or a gathering of big black cormorants, swimming deep in the water, as is their habit, only the head and neck being visible. Or it may be a seal, lifting its gray head above the wave, watching and following the boat afar-off, after the shyly inquisitive fashion of these creatures; or a string of porpoises tumbling past in their wheel-like movements; or even a 'blower'—the local name for the whale—ranging up the firth in the wake of the herring-shoals, showing you for a minute his great back-fin and shoulder, as he empties his lungs of water and re-fills them with air, preparatory to another plunge under the waves in quest of his prey. And then, as you near the headland, and lie out towards St Magnus Bay, you have on one hand the craggy rocks of Vementry, on the other the great red cliffs of Rooe—massive walls of iron ruggedness, scarped and battered by a hundred storms; with solitary stacks of rock, round whose granite feet the billows rave ceaselessly, churning themselves into foam; or dark sea-caves, gloomy as the portals of Avernus, and melancholy with the long-resounding of many waters.

Next to the huge perpendicular walls of rock that girdle the Shetland Isles—at Fitful Head rising to nine hundred and twenty-eight feet above the sea—what strikes the stranger most is the entire absence of trees. Where the land slopes up from the edge of the voes or bays, the hillsides are in part covered with the cultivated crofts of the inhabitants, lying like bright bits of patchwork in various shades of green. The pastures between are now brown with the hot July sun, and the black peat-mosses are dotted here and there with natives procuring their winter supply of fuel. But over all is no shadow,

save of the crofter's white hut on the hill-side, or of the crofter himself at work. Nothing growing is to be seen higher than the bere or the burdock. And yet there must have been a great growth of trees or other forms of plant-life in distant ages, for the peat-mosses on the Mainland are deep and abundant, and remains of the mountain-ash and other trees are to be found in them still. Why, then, are there no trees now? Is it that the climate is changed?—or is it due to the unenclosed nature of the country, where, for hundreds of years, geese and sheep, cattle and ponies, have been allowed their own will, eating down everything as it grows? At anyrate, there can be no doubt about the condition of Papa Stour. There is not a single tree or bush upon it, and there probably never has been, for there is not an inch of peat-moss on the whole island. If ever Papa Stour had its native poet—and what place in the North has not?—he must needs have been deprived of much of the permanent stock-in-trade of his silvan brothers. For here there are no 'trees' to be 'fanned by the breeze,' no 'murmuring wood' to rhyme with 'solitude,' no 'leafy shade' for 'whispering lovers made.' The western half of the island is as bare as the palm of one's hand, and has in great portions been skinned of what little turf it has ever had, to help out the want of peat, which can only be obtained by fetching it in boats a distance of eight or ten miles. And not of much value is this turf as fuel, after all; one old woman saying it 'made mair reek dan heat.' On the southern and eastern portions of the island, however, there are bits of fairly good soil, on which were growing excellent crops of bere (a coarse kind of barley), oats, turnips, and potatoes.

The great attraction of the island is its rock scenery. Lying farther out in the Atlantic than the Mainland, Papa Stour acts as a kind of advanced guard, and has to meet the full brunt of the mighty waves, that break on it during storms with the noise of thunder, and with a force to which the artillery of war are but as toys. Besides the creeks and voes which indent the island all round, there are evidences everywhere of the great gaps which the sea is making in the solid volcanic rock of which the island is composed. Its mode of operation is easily understood. The rock first gives way at the foot of the cliff, where it is broken and battered by the huge boulders, tons in weight, which the billows hurl against it. In course of time, a cavity is formed by these monster battering-rams; and the cavity grows and grows until it becomes a huge cave or tunnel, arched over by the superimposed cliff. In storms and high tides, when great volumes of water are driven as by a force-pump into this tunnel, the compressed air of the interior will sometimes burst through the upper rock, blasting it as if with gunpowder, and so giving the waters vent, perhaps a hundred yards inland from the edge of the cliff. Once this opening in the solid land is made—and there are more than one such opening at present on the island—the water, in the winter storms, is driven up through it with terrific force, even to a height of sixty or seventy feet. And still the process goes on; year by year the opening is widened; until all the rock between it and the sea is wrenched and torn away, bit by

bit, and a great and deep ravine is left, through which the fierce tides foam and chafe at will.*

This process, assisted no doubt by chemical decomposition and other agencies, works slowly, and must have taken thousands of years to effect the havoc and devastation we now see. Neither is the result always the same. Sometimes the water that is driven into these tunnelled-out caves never succeeds in making an opening for itself upwards, and so the tunnelling process goes on indefinitely, as in the case of the Bottomless Geo, which penetrates the island at North Ness to a depth unknown. In other cases, where a comparatively narrow neck of land is operated upon, the rock has been bored until daylight is reached on the opposite side. This has occurred at what is called the Hole of Bordie, which runs for nearly half a mile right through a ness on the north-west side of the island; also at Brei Holm, on the east side, and elsewhere. In calm weather, a native pilot will row you through these tunnels from end to end. Some, such as the long one of Bordie, are dark and dismal retreats; others, like those at Brei Holm, being short and well lighted, are exceedingly beautiful, especially when the sunshine strikes the rippling water, throwing myriad reflections upwards to the high arched roof of rock, where they flit and flicker among the shadows of the warm pink felstone like so many butterflies of transparent gold.

Outside Housa Voe—a place of pleasant memories—and near to Brei Holm, stands the Maiden Stack, an isolated and apparently unclimbable rock perhaps fifty or sixty feet in height, and with the remains of a house atop of it, in which it is said a maiden was at one time immured by her father. But love has signals of its own; and her lover in Northmaven discovered her prison-house, and carried her off. In these ancient stories, as is right and proper, it is always the poor old father who gets beaten in the end. Here, in this voe, the banks of seaweed, seen through the pale emerald of the clear water, are extremely beautiful, clinging to every rock and skerry, and fringing the base of the Maiden Stack in clusters of tasselled green. But it is to the west side of the island you must go for the wonders of rock scenery. Here, on the westmost point of land, rises up from the top of a huge cliff a singular rocky projection, called from its form the Horn of Papa. Its outline on the left, as you approach, will be seen to resemble a human profile—like the face of one who, with fixed gaze, looks far out at sea. Here also are Snolda Stack, Lyra Skerry, Fougla Skerry (the Rock of Fowls); here are geos wild and picturesque, lofty arches cut by the sea-waves out of the solid stone, great masses of rock lying rent and broken everywhere—the huge artillery held in readiness for the next great battle between the Titan forces of wind and wave and cliff. There has been a storm at sea but yesternight, and the long sullen heave of the Atlantic is like the slow breathing and uplifting of the chest of some giant in repose after conflict. Yet ever as the slow wave reaches the shore, its hidden force is made manifest by the white rage with which

* A ravine of this kind is called in Shetland a *gro* (pron. *g hard, grr*). A *voe*, on the other hand, is a bay, or an arm of the sea similar to the lochs of the west coast of Scotland.

it breaks upon and lashes the obstructing cliff, sending great flakes of white foam, like aerated snow-balls, windward across the isle. And all above and around is the flight of innumerable sea-birds, whose shrill wailing mingles sadly with the hoarse roar of the waters, as if each pair of white wings bore aloft a mourning spirit—mourning for the dead whom the ocean holds.

This western half of the island is barren as a desert. On the top of the sea-cliffs there are fine stretches of grassy turf, green and smooth as the best kept lawn; but away from the shore, the ground has been so scarified that little turf remains, and the rock is exposed everywhere. Here you may see at all times in summer, bands of women, each with a string of little ponies, carrying home the turf which has been previously cut and piled up in stacks. Panniers, formed of straw network, are slung across the backs of the ponies, and filled with turf; then the large basket of plaited straw, called a 'kishie,' which each woman has on her back, is also filled with turf; upon which the procession—woman and ponies, with the ponies' foals and the inevitable sheep-dog—moves off towards the eastern or southern side of the island, where the houses and crofts are. The younger women when at this work cover their head with a little white or red shawl, and look picturesque; the older women mostly affect large black shawls, which they arrange in such a manner across the brow and under the mouth as to leave only a portion of the face exposed, giving them somewhat the appearance of Moorish women. The men at that season of the year are engaged at the sea-fishing, which is the staple support of the people. Without the fishing, indeed, the island could not maintain its forty families in life.

From an early period Papa Stour must have been inhabited, judging from the numerous traces that exist of brochs, Picts' houses, cairns, and stone circles, with those mysterious lines of short upright stones and boulders that intersect the island almost everywhere. Of the brochs and cairns little is left for the antiquary or the curious; they were too convenient as quarries to remain till now intact. The people are of Scandinavian origin, and they still retain a knowledge of the ancient Norwegian sword-dance referred to by Sir Walter Scott in *The Pirate*.

The houses here are much the same as crofters' houses all over Shetland—with low walls, an arch-shaped roof thatched with straw, and weighted down with heavy stones, to secure it against the hurricanes of winter. The fire is on the floor, a little in front of the end wall farthest from the door, and the smoke finds—or at least is expected to find—its way out at an open chimney in the roof. In some houses there are internal chimneys of wood, which arrangement adds much to the comfort of the occupants. In all, there is the spinning-wheel and the ever-clicking knitting-pins, as also the ancient stone quern for grinding their bere into meal. The meal so prepared is called 'burstin,' small cakes baked of it are 'burstin-broonies,' and, when eaten with cream, it is known as 'burstin-pram'—all which words may exercise the etymologist. Each crofter has, as a rule, one or more cows and ponies, with a number of sheep corresponding to the extent of his holding. Some families are, in their rank,

evidently comfortable and well-to-do; others are as evidently poor.

Upon the whole, however, they are of a cheerful temperament, notwithstanding their numerous privations, and enter heartily into any little jest or merriment. The lover of folklore may even still pick up a few tales about those supernatural creatures the trows—related to the trolls of the Scandinavian mythology—'peerie men with long hats,' and great workers in metal. These trows are no longer believed in, but are still spoken of. For, of an evening, when the inmates are gathered round the glowing peat-fire—the women-folk as usual knitting hard, and listening—you may hear, as we heard from the lips of a fine old Shetlander, some of those old-world tales. It may be of the man who one night, in passing Stack o' Barg, a noted haunt of the trows, heard a great noise inside. When he arrived at his place, and was passing the cowhouse, he said to his folks: 'There's a terrible noise in Stack o' Barg to-night.' Now, it so happened that at that moment a trow-wife, who had left her baby behind her at home, was in the cowhouse stealing milk from the cows, and when she heard what the man said, she sprang up from her stool, and crying out, 'Hivla Tivla!—Fivla has faun i' the finna [fire] and brunt itsel,' fled from the place. After the trow-woman was gone, a copper pan was found, which within the memory of the narrator was still shown at Feal, in the island of Fetlar, as the vessel the trow-woman left behind her on that occasion; and it was said the people who found the pan never wanted for anything so long as they kept it. You may hear also the merry tale of the trow-man and the trow-wife, Shankum and Jinkum, and how one night the miller mischievously scalded Jinkum with his boiling supper as she lay before the mill-fire warming herself.

The memory of these stories is fast dying out, even in Papa Stour. So also is the existence of a usage which at one time prevailed there, as in other places, among the sea-going folk. This was, never, when at sea, to call a thing on land by its right name. The horse, for instance, was called the 'sniggun'; the cow, the 'dron-yer'; the sheep, the 'bleater'; the cat, the 'four-fitter'; the pig, the 'grunter'; the dog, the 'bonny-biter'; the hen, the 'yappie'; a knife was a 'skyoan'; the fire, the 'finna'; and so on. Sea-birds, however, were called by their ordinary names. Superstitions such as these seem, in our modern way of looking at things, difficult to account for. They had their origin, doubtless, in an age when the phenomena of nature were less understood than now; and the sea, to those far-off islanders, must always have been a thing of mystery and of terror. It was at once their chief support and their greatest danger. There was no science, as now, to explain or predict its movements; they only perceived its sudden transitions from calm to storm, its merciless and unmitigable fury when aroused. And reasons sad enough had they for this mysterious awe of the great deep: for the little churchyard in Papa Stour holds not all its dead. That sea of theirs has many a loved one in its secret keeping, and it keeps its secrets well.

As we left Housa Voe for the last time, the island lay like a dark mass against the glowing gold of the northern sky, where the sun was setting

in unclouded splendour; and as each familiar stack and skerry was left behind, and the figures that watched us from the shore grew dim and dimmer in the gray distance, it was not without regret that we bade farewell to Papa Stour, to the simple pleasures of its kindly people, and the sterile beauty of their island home.

A DEAD RECKONING.

CHAPTER IX.

GERALD BROOKE bade farewell to his wife, and quitted Beechley Towers about an hour after midnight. There was no moon; but the clouds had dispersed after the rain, and the stars shone brightly. His object was to make his way to Penrhyn Court, the seat of Sir John Starkie, the justice of the peace who had signed the warrant for his arrest. It seemed like walking into the lion's den; but it was probably the wisest thing he could have done under the circumstances. Penrhyn Court was one of the last places in the world where anybody would think of looking for him. Mr Tom Starkie had offered to find a secure hiding-place for him for the time being; and after he had once consented to yield to his wife's entreaties and keep out of the way for the present, while awaiting the course of events, it seemed to him that he could not do better than accept his friend's offer. For one thing, he would be on the spot, should anything turn up necessitating his immediate presence; for another, he would be able to communicate with his wife without risk, through the medium of kind-hearted Tom.

Over the parting of husband and wife we need not linger; but it was with a sad heart that Gerald quitted the threshold of the pleasant home where, but such a little time ago, he had looked forward to spending many happy years.

Skirting coppice and hedgerow, and keeping as much as possible in the black shade of the trees, he sped swiftly on his way. The distance from the Towers to the Court was about three miles as the crow flies; and almost as straight as the crow flies went Gerald, taking hedge and ditch and stone wall on his way, and allowing no obstacle to turn him from his course. Once, as he was on the point of emerging from a coppice of nut-trees, he came upon two keepers, armed with guns, who were crossing a meadow not many yards away, evidently on the lookout for poachers. He shrank back on his footsteps as silent as a shadow, and waited for fully ten minutes before he ventured to proceed. Again, at a point where it was necessary for him to cross the high-road, he had a narrow escape from coming face to face with a mounted constable who was riding leisurely along on his solitary round. He had just time to sink back into the hedge-bottom and lie there as motionless as a log till the danger was past.

Mr Tom Starkie had described the position of his rooms to Gerald, so that the latter had no difficulty in making his way to them. He was

to be guided by a lighted window the blind of which showed a transverse bar of a darker shade. As soon as he found this window, Gerald gave utterance to a low whistle. The light was at once withdrawn, as a token that his signal had been heard; and two minutes later he found himself safely in his friend's rooms.

So far all had gone well; but only the preliminary step had been taken as yet. Not a soul in Penrhyn Court but Tom himself must know or even suspect the presence there of Gerald Brooke. But Tom had thought of all this when he first urged his friend to come to the Court, and had in his mind's eye a certain safe hiding-place, known to him and his father alone, where Gerald could lie by and await the course of events. The hiding-place in question was known as 'The Priest's Hole,' and was an integral part of the oldest portion of the house. A sliding panel in the library, held in its place by a concealed spring, gave admission to a narrow passage built in the thickness of one of the outer walls, down from which access was obtained, by means of a steep flight of steps, to two small chambers hollowed out of the very foundations of the house. These rooms were shut out from all daylight, the walls were unplastered, and the floors of hard dry earth. In the larger of the two was a small fireplace, but without any grate in it, the chimney of which opened into one of the main stacks of the Court. In one corner was a tressel bedstead of black worm-eaten oak, which would seem to indicate that the place had not been without an occasional occupant in days gone by.

The first two hours after Gerald's arrival were spent by Tom in victualling and furnishing this place of refuge. Having encased his feet in a pair of list slippers, his first visit was to the larder, where he requisitioned bread, cheese, butter, tea, coffee, sardines, and sundry other comestibles, greatly to the perplexity of the worthy cook when she came to look over her stores next morning. His next raid had for its objects candles, matches, and crockery. Then came a folding-chair and a spirit-lamp from his own rooms; and so on till he possessed himself of as many articles as he required. Tom took immense delight in these stealthy raids during the small-hours of the morning; and more than once he was compelled to come to a stand with his arms full of things and indulge in a silent laugh, which shook him from head to foot, when he thought of worthy Sir John asleep, and of what his feelings would have been could he have seen how his first-born was just then occupied.

The June sun was high above the horizon before Tom's preparations were completed. It was time for Gerald to vanish like a ghost at cockerow. The two friends shook hands and parted for a little while; but when Gerald heard the click of the sliding panel as it was pushed back into its place, and when he had shut the door at the bottom of the stairs and had glanced once again round the dismal dungeon that was to be his home for he knew not how long a time to come, he felt as if he were buried alive and should never see daylight again. His heart sank lower, if that were possible, than it had sunk before, and for a few moments he felt as if his fortitude must give way. But this mood was not of long duration; he buoyed himself up with the

thought that another day was already here, and that in a few hours more his innocence would doubtless be proved. Presently he lay down on his pallet, utterly worn out in body and mind, and five minutes later was fast asleep.

Of Gerald Brooke's life during the next few weeks it is not needful to speak in detail; indeed, each day that came was so much a repetition of the one that had gone before it, that there would be but little to record. Tom rarely ventured to visit his friend till after his father and the rest of the household had retired for the night. It was a joyful sound to Gerald when he heard the click of the panel and knew that for two or three hours to come he should be a free man. Then through the silent shut-up house the two men would steal like burglars to Tom's room. Once there, they felt safe; for the rest of the family and the servants slept in different wings of the rambling old house. On nights when there was no moon, or when it was overcast, the two friends paced a certain pleached alley of the lower garden for an hour at a time; it was the only exercise Gerald was able to obtain. After that they sat and smoked and talked in Tom's room till the clock struck three, which was the signal for Gerald's return to his dungeon. Twice each week Mr Starkie rode over to the Towers, acting the part of postman between husband and wife, in addition to that of general purveyor of news.

So day after day passed without bringing the murderer of Von Rosenberg to light or tending in any way to weaken the force of the circumstantial evidence accumulated against Gerald. It seemed, indeed, as if the police had made up their minds that Mr Brooke, and he alone, must be the guilty man, directing all their efforts towards his capture, and listening with incredulous ears to such persons as suggested that, after all, it was just possible he might not be the individual they wanted.

'If he isn't guilty, why don't he show up? Why has he gone and hid himself where nobody can find him?' was Mr Drumley's invariable rejoinder, when any such suggestions happened to be ventilated in his presence. Such questions were difficult to answer.

Many a time during those weeks of slow torture, as he sat brooding in his underground chamber by the dismal light of a couple of candles, did Gerald wish with all his heart that he had not yielded to his wife's entreaties, but had stayed, and braved the thing out to the bitter end.

Clara, meanwhile, was doing all that it was possible for a woman, circumstanced as she was, to do. When a week had passed and nothing tending to prove her husband's innocence had been brought to light, she did that which Mr George Crofton proposed doing, that is to say, she engaged the services of an experienced private detective. The man came, listened respectfully to all she had to say, and promised that his best endeavours should be at her service; but after his visit, day succeeded day without bringing any ray of comfort to the young wife's aching heart. Could it be possible, she sometimes asked herself, a little later on, that this astute individual, while to all appearance falling in with her views, really believed in her husband's guilt as strongly as Mr Drumley did, and while quite willing to humour her and spend her money, was in his

heart impressed with the futility of looking elsewhere for the criminal? It was a weary time, full of heartache in the present, and with a future that began to loom more darkly as day followed day in slow and sad procession.

By-and-by there came a certain night when Tom Starkie met his guest with a very long and gloomy visage. His news was quickly told. His father had suddenly made up his mind to start at once for one of the German spas, and insisted upon Tom's accompanying him. 'And if I go, my dear Brooke—and I'm afraid I can't get out of it—what's to become of you?'

'I must flit,' answered Gerald with a shrug; 'there's no help for it.' He almost hailed the prospect as a relief, so unutterably weary was he becoming of the terrible monotony of his present mode of life; but the question of course was, Whither was he to go? At length, after the two men had smoked some half-dozen pipes each, a happy thought came to Gerald. He called to mind that he had another friend on whose secrecy and good faith he could rely, and who, he felt sure, would befriend him in his present strait, if it were in anyway possible for him to do so. The name of the friend in question was Roger Chamfrey.

A few hours later, Tom Starkie set out for London in search of Mr Chamfrey, whom he fortunately found at his club. The latter had of course read everything that had appeared in the newspapers respecting Von Rosenberg's mysterious death, and Tom found him to be as firm a believer in Gerald's innocence as he himself was.

'I've got the very thing to suit poor Brooke,' he said. 'The situation of second-keeper is vacant on a certain moor which I rent in a wild and lonely part of Yorkshire, and Brooke will be as safe there as he would be in the heart of Africa. I will give him a letter to Timley the head-keeper, who is a very decent sort of fellow, so worded that Brooke shall receive every possible consideration while yet ostensibly filling the part of assistant-keeper. What's more easy than to hint that our friend is a young gentleman of position who has quarrelled with his family, but that in the course of a little time he will come into a large property?' And Mr Chamfrey laughed.

So the letter in question was written and given to Mr Starkie, together with many kind messages for Gerald.

Four days later, Gerald reached his new refuge in safety. What means he adopted to escape recognition by the way, and by what circuitous routes he travelled, need not be specified here. It was indeed a wild and desolate tract of country in which he found himself; but in that fact lay his safety. Timley received him kindly; and when he had read and digested his employer's letter, he at once proceeded to turn himself and his wife out of the best bedroom in his cottage, and allotted the same to his new assistant, greatly to the surprise and disgust of his better-half, until he had pacified her by a few sentences whispered in her ear, after which she became all smiles and graciousness, and seemed as if she could not do enough to make 'Mr Davis' comfortable. When they were alone, or when no one was within earshot, Timley invariably addressed Gerald as 'Sir.'

The free open-air life he now led did much towards improving Gerald's health and spirits. Once a week he wrote to his wife, and once a week he received a long letter in return. His letters to her were addressed under an assumed name to be left till called for at the post-office of a little town some dozen miles from the Towers. From this place they were fetched by Margery, who made the journey by rail, and who at the same time dropped a return letter into the box addressed to 'Mr Davis' the keeper.

So time went on till the 12th of August came round, about which date Timley had notice that in the course of the following week his master would arrive accompanied by a number of friends. At the last minute, however, Mr Chamfrey was detained by important business, and his friends arrived without him. All was now bustle and excitement, and Gerald found quite enough to do. The first and second days' shooting passed off admirably. The weather was perfect, birds were plentiful, and everybody was in high good-humour. Gerald acted his part to perfection—at least Timley told him so. All fear of recognition by any of the visitors had passed away, and on the third morning after their arrival he caught himself humming an air from *Lucia* while cleaning the barrel of his gun outside the cottage door. Hearing a footstep on the garden path, he turned his head quickly, and found himself confronted by a man who had been in his own service only some eight or nine months previously. The two stood staring at each other for a few moments in silence. It was at once evident to Gerald that, despite the change in his appearance, he was recognised. Before either had spoken a word Timley came out of the cottage. Then the man delivered his message, which was from one of the visitors at the Lodge in whose service he now was. Then, after another stare at Gerald, who still went on cleaning his gun, the man turned and went.

Twelve hours later, Gerald Brooke—clean shaven except for a small moustache which was dyed black, and with a black wig over his own closely cropped hair—was flying southward in the night express. Mr Starkie, who had returned from the Continent by this time, and to whom he had telegraphed under an assumed name, previously agreed on, met him at the London terminus. The conference between the two friends was a long one. It resulted in Gerald coming to the decision that he would take up his abode in London itself, at least for some time to come, as being, all things considered, as safe a hiding-place as any for a man circumstanced as he was. It was, besides, becoming requisite that some decision should be arrived at with regard to matters at the Towers. Clara was still there; but although she had cut down the household expenses to the lowest possible limits, her supply of ready-money was dwindling away; and when that was gone, where was more to come from? With Gerald's disappearance his income had disappeared too. It was an impossibility for him to draw a cheque, or receive a shilling of rent from any of his tenants, while matters with him remained as they were. Then, again, Clara's long separation from her husband, and the many weeks of anxiety she had undergone, were wearing away both her health and her spirits. 'Only let

us be together again, darling—that is all I crave,' she wrote to her husband. 'Two little rooms in some back street will seem like a palace if only you are with me.'

Thus it fell out that on a certain afternoon about a week after Gerald's arrival in London, two ladies, both of them closely veiled, who had been hunting for apartments all morning, and were utterly disheartened and tired out by their want of success, stood for a few moments gazing into a pastry-cook's window in Tottenham Court Road. As she did so, the younger lady raised her veil. Next instant she was startled by hearing some one say in French: 'O papa, papa, here is the beautiful lady who gave me the cakes and fruit at that grand house in the country!'

Clara dropped her veil and turned. She recognised the little speaker at once, although he no longer wore his mountebank's dress. There, too, was Picot himself, who had come to a stand a few yards away while he lighted a cigarette.

Tired and anxious though she was, Clara would not go without speaking to the boy. 'So you have not forgotten me, Henri,' she said, 'nor the cakes either? Would you not like some more cakes to-day?'

For answer he lifted one of her hands to his lips and kissed it.

When Mrs Brooke and Henri came out of the shop they found Miss Primby and M. Picot deep in conversation. The mountebank was dressed quite smartly to-day, and had a flower in his button-hole. As Miss Primby said to her niece afterwards: 'Although the poor man may be nothing but a tumbler, he is the essence of gallantry and politeness.'

After a few words had passed between Clara and Picot, some impulse—she could never afterwards have told whence it originated—prompted her to say to him: 'My aunt and I are in London to-day on rather a peculiar errand. We are here to find apartments for—for some dear friends of ours who a little time ago were rich, but who are now very poor. We have been going about all morning, but cannot succeed in finding what we require. It is just possible, monsieur, that you with your knowledge of London may be able to assist us.'

'I am entirely at madame's service,' answered Picot as he raised his hat for a moment. 'Is it furnished apartments that madame requires?'

'Yes—four or five furnished rooms at a moderate rent, and, if possible, not more than a mile from where we are now.'

Picot considered for a moment or two, then he said: 'I remind myself of a place that will, I think, suit madame. The landlord is a compatriot of my own; he is honest man; he will not cheat his lodgers. If madame would like to see the apartments'—

'By all means, if you recommend them, monsieur.'

'Then I will give madame the address.' He tore a leaf out of his pocket-book, pencilled down a couple of lines, and handed the paper to Mrs Brooke with an elaborate bow. At Clara's request he then hailed a passing cab; then both the ladies, having kissed Henri and shaken hands with Picot, were driven away.

Henri, as he stood gazing after the cab, said to

his father: 'Are the angels as beautiful as that lady, papa?'

'That is more than I can say, *mon p'tit*,' replied the mountebank with a laugh. 'When I have seen an angel, I shall be able to tell thee.'

(To be continued.)

THE NOVEMBER METEORS.

UNTIL a few years ago, this term was sufficiently precise as applied to that shower of meteoric bodies which appears in abundance in the middle of November at intervals of thirty-three or thirty-four years, being seen for two or three years in succession, after which a few, and a few only, are visible about the same date until another such period has elapsed. That which led to the recognition of their being not terrestrial but cosmical phenomena—belonging to interplanetary regions—was the fact, the first notice of which is due to Humboldt in 1799, that they always emanate from the same place *amongst the stars*, which of course alters its apparent position regarding the points of the compass as the night advances, in consequence of the earth's rotation. In the year just alluded to, a grand display of these meteors was noticed in South America in the early morning of November 13. An equally fine shower was seen, chiefly on the Atlantic coast of North America, on the same day in 1833, a less striking one having been witnessed in part of Europe and in Arabia in 1832.

It was not, however, until 1864—when another such shower was nearly due—that the subject was taken up by Professor H. A. Newton, of Yale College, Connecticut, who succeeded in showing, by decisive historic evidence, that similar showers had been manifested at these intervals during many centuries, occurring, however, about two days later each century. Account was of course taken in the discussion that the change of style in the sixteenth—in England the eighteenth—century made the progressive greater lateness of date appear more rapid than it really was when only very early and recent observations were compared with each other. This slow alteration of date was shown by Professor Adams to be the effect of perturbations produced by the attraction of the planets, and it became clear that the meteors composed, in fact, a vast shoal revolving in a ring—one portion of which was much thicker than the rest—round the sun in about thirty-three and a quarter years, the earth in its annual orbit passing through this stream about the 13th of the month of November. A recurrence, therefore, of the phenomenon in abundance was confidently predicted for that date in the year 1866; nor did it fail to take place. The display, indeed, on this occasion was especially grand, and formed a sight which none who saw it can ever forget. It was repeated, but in much smaller abundance, in the following year, since which but few meteors have been seen at the time in question, the earth passing through parts of the ring in which those bodies are but sparsely scattered, though in some years they have been more numerous than in others. No one who has examined the subject doubts that brilliant displays will occur towards the end of the century, in 1899 and 1900.

But we commenced by alluding to the fact that more than one fine periodic shower of meteors is now recognised as taking place in the month of November. That of which we have hitherto been speaking forms the stream called the Leonids, because the meteors of which it is composed always appear to radiate from a point in the heavens in the constellation Leo. We must now devote a few words to the other, which appears at intervals of several years very nearly at the end of November, the meteors of which radiate from the constellation Andromeda, and are therefore called Andromedes. Unlike the former, these manifest themselves a little earlier on each occasion, and were first noticed as taking place early in the month of December. However, the first really grand display took place on the 27th of November 1872. It would seem that they recur at intervals of thirteen years, and another magnificent shower was seen on the evening of the same date in the year 1885. But whereas the periodicity of the other stream was the first thing noticed about it, the periodicity of this was anticipated from a similar circumstance connected with its regular appearance.

Professor Schiaparelli of Milan was the first to call attention to the fact that the meteoric stream of the 9-10th of August—called that of the Perseids because the meteors belonging to it radiate from a point in the constellation Perseus—moves in the same orbit with that of a small comet which was discovered about the end of 1865 and was nearest the sun in January 1866. That comet also revolves in a period of about thirty-three and a quarter years; and it would seem that it is in fact the largest member of the stream of meteors which follow in its wake and are distributed, with more uniformity than the Leonids in their orbit, along the whole length of its elliptic path. The comet is probably undergoing a process of disintegration; and though it will be looked for in 1899, it is not likely that it will be seen as a comet at many more appearances. Shortly after Schiaparelli had made this suggestive discovery, it was remarked that the Leonids or meteors of the middle of November also move in the same orbit as a comet which has only been seen in the year 1862, and appears to occupy about one hundred and twenty-four years in revolving round the sun.

Now, a very interesting comet, as it afterwards proved to be, was discovered in France by Montaigne in the year 1772. Its periodicity, however, was not recognised until after its rediscovery in Bohemia by an Austrian officer named Biela, in the year 1826, when it was found that it was moving in an elliptic orbit with a period which it took only about six and a half years to complete. (It had indeed been observed in 1805, but supposed then also to be a new comet.) Its period being thus known, it was seen again in 1832; and though at the next return it escaped observation, being unfavourably placed, was also observed in the winter of 1845-46. On this occasion it was found to have separated into two companion comets of different and fluctuating brightnesses; and the two portions returned in company, but at a somewhat greater distance from each other, in 1852. Since then, nothing has been seen of this remarkable comet or comets, its particles having apparently too little mutual attrac-

tion to remain united. But it is known that the earth crosses its or their orbit about the end of November, and that bodies moving in that orbit would appear to come from a point in the constellation Andromeda. Meteors, therefore, being seen to radiate from that part of the sky first about the beginning of December, and afterwards at the end of November, it was concluded that they had the same sort of connection with Biela's comet that the meteors of November 13 and of August 9-10 had with the comets of which we have spoken. Hence, as the comet's period was six and a half years in length, it would, at intervals of two periods, or thirteen years, be near that part of its orbit traversed by the earth; and if the meteors were, as was reasonable to suppose, thickest there, a fine display of them would be seen at times separated by that duration. Accordingly, the grand shower of November 27, 1872, led to the expectation of another on the same date in 1885, which, as we have already remarked, did really take place. Another will be looked forward to in 1898; but if the meteors become as time passes on more uniformly distributed through the orbit, a shower will ultimately occur every year about that date. That it is a little earlier each time, whilst the display of November 13 is a little later, carries with it the consequence that the two showers will, about three hundred years hence, take place on the same night—that is, on that of the 20th of November.

It should be noticed before concluding that there is a difference in the direction of motion of the meteors forming the Leonids of the middle and the Andromedes of the end of November. The latter move in the same direction as the earth, and overtake it in consequence of their greater speed when in the part of their orbit nearest the sun; the former move in the reverse direction to the earth and collide with it, as a down-train would with an up-train on the same metals. As a consequence, the relative velocity of the Leonid meteors is much greater than that of the Andromedes. The Perseids, and the comet (1862, iii.) with which they appear to be connected, move, like the Leonids, in the opposite direction to that of the earth.

JAMES PINK'S LAST ILLUSION.

'It is, I suppose, as likely to come to anything as your previous—fascinations. You are certainly an odd person, James.'

'Oh no, Maria: this is quite different. I assure you I have learnt caution with experience; and if the world has taught me no other lesson, it has taught me that the eyes of a man are really the least trustworthy of the faculties with which he has been endowed.'

'What nonsense! As if *you* are ever likely to come to such a pitch of wisdom. Why, it was but last year, at Oban, you remember, that you fell in love with a woman who was a grandmother over and over again. She tricked you as easily as if you had been a babe: what with her paint and powder, false hair and false teeth. And I can't say you did yourself credit when you vowed to me that you were about to offer your hand and

what may remain of your heart to a person who proved to be two-thirds bereft of her wits. I don't know which county asylum she now resides in; but I daresay you know: and indeed, knowing you as I do, it really would not surprise me to be told that you were still in correspondence with her. There's one thing: the letters on either side would have about an equal share of sense in them.'

'You are too monstrous, Maria, to go on in that way,' protested James.

'And now,' continued his sister, 'you come with a fresh story about a siren sitting somewhere at the receipt of custom, with the loveliest complexion you ever beheld, and a demeanour the perfection of modesty, simplicity, and grace. A deal you know about complexions; though I warrant if it is given to men to know the qualities they most excel in, you ought to be a remarkable judge of the creature's simplicity.'

It was in this way. James Pink, who was a country lawyer under no obligation to work for a livelihood, passed three or four months of each year of his life in travelling about the world. During his travels, he periodically fell in love. He was accompanied by his sister Maria, a lady of forty-five to fifty, who sympathised with none of her brother's tastes. Least of all, was she by nature disposed to view charitably his love fancies. In fact, they caused her intense irritation. Why this should have been so, we cannot tell. But the truth was that no sooner did her brother begin, timidly enough, one or other of his stories about a new impression made upon his heart, than she was wont to toss her head, and otherwise manifest a little temper, blamable in a girl of twelve or thirteen, but very singular in a woman of mature age.

Upon this occasion they were at Naples. It was spring; and Easter. They had viewed with complacency the pet lambs which the Neapolitan children are wont to lead about the streets during the latter days of Lent, fattening them upon grass, cabbage leaves, or what not, in readiness for the butcher's knife on Easter eve. Neither the one nor the other of them had grown at all cosmopolitan in the course of their ten or twelve years' travel upon the Continent. Each regarded with horror those customs of a country which differed from the customs of their own small village in the north of England.

'They do not that sort of thing in Carsforth,' was with James or Maria Pink a common sort of condemnation, indicative of the extreme of dispraise.

If either of them was disposed to be at all liberal in his or her estimate of a world which differed from Carsforth, it was James Pink. But he was cautious to keep his opinions to himself.

Thus they had driven to and fro in Naples, with their eyes fixed upon the smoke of Vesuvius, when Vesuvius was in sight, and at other times with expressions of pain upon their honest faces, as they remarked the grime and filth which accompany the colour and vivacity of Neapolitan life. Maria Pink on these occasions journeyed with a small golden smelling-bottle in her hand; and however picturesque was this or that grouping of lads or lasses, ragged men and ragged women, upon the hot pavement of Santa Lucia, which

she was requested by the car-driver to look upon, she never so far forgot herself as to omit to use her salts while she inspected through her glasses the details of the curious scene.

'For any sake, don't let us stay here,' she would remark to her brother. 'There's typhus in the air upon this spot, if typhus exists anywhere!'

Imagine, then, this poor lady's disquietude when one morning her brother announced to her, with sufficient timidity and humility indeed, that he was enamoured afresh—this time of a woman resident in the city which appalled her so much from a social aspect.

The declaration was made while they were at breakfast in the *Hôtel Vesuve*. It did not come out point blank. James had trifled with his egg in a nervous manner, and his sister had asked him what ailed him. She was so positive that the drains of the hotel were out of order, and that her brother's trouble was due to blood-poisoning or fever in its embryonic stage, that he allayed her suspicions by telling her what he would much have preferred to keep to himself. She laughed at first, in a stiff way; but subsequently, when she perceived that the affair had gone too deep to be removed by the first charge of ridicule, she tried satire and informal abuse. And she was not a little astonished when she found that for once her brother was able to stand against all her weapons and all her cajoleries. There was that in the eyes of James Pink which made her darts glance from him and leave him untouched.

'I tell you what, James; I think we had better go to Capri at once. I find Naples quite oppressively hot. We will take the boat to-morrow morning.' She said this as though her suggestion were a decision which could not be contested.

Her brother, however, was equal to the situation. 'It would be inconvenient for me, dear Maria, just at present. Next week would be much better. Then I should be able to place myself entirely at your disposal.'

For reply, Miss Pink rose from the table, and walked out of the breakfast room. This sounds very trivial. But you should have seen the look which she cast upon her brother ere she left him: and you should have seen the lady's demeanour as she turned to go. There was something terribly imperious about one and the other alike. And the other people in the hotel, who were witnesses of the departure, at once assumed that James and his sister were an ill-mated man and wife, and that James deserved the utmost compassion that man or woman may tender to man.

Left alone, however, James Pink showed none of the depression of the man who is in chains to his wife, and who has just had a new bond of pain set upon him. He watched his sister depart as if she were somebody else's sister, and not his Maria. Then, with the same look of elation which had perplexed and disturbed Miss Pink, he challenged the room to convict him of aught akin to misery. Moreover, he called for the waiter, and gave certain orders about the evening's dinner in a tone of resolution that raised him tenfold in the waiter's esteem, and altered the opinion which the other guests in the hotel had casually formed about him.

Nor was this the limit of his metamorphosis. He asked for cigarettes—a pernicious invention

which hitherto he had been content to execrate. And, having allowed the waiter to light one for him, while he held it in his mouth, he left the room with—of course speaking in metaphor—banners flying.

Miss Pink was stupefied to see her brother pass into the hall of the hotel smoking a cigarette. She had left the door of the ladies' room open on purpose that she might estimate exactly the acuteness of the suffering she had caused James by the manifestation of her displeasure; that she might see him in his despondency as soon as possible, and perhaps, there and then, make proposals for reconciliation. And this was what met her eyes! But ere she could recover her equanimity, her brother had disappeared. A whiff of smoke was all that remained of him. It was very delicate aromatic smoke; but did that make the sin any the less flagrant?

In the meantime, James Pink was walking towards the city. He was hailed by countless carmen, who cracked their whips at him and cried 'Di!' (I say!) in the cool way that is characteristic of the Neapolitan javey. There was no doubting his nationality. His gait proclaimed it, no less than his broad red innocent face, and his white hat above. And who but an Englishman of James Pink's type, or a German of the burgher class, would have gone about the fashionable part of Naples with a large umbrella of green silk with a white lining? But of this and the kindred distractions of the streets, our friend took no heed. He walked with an air of absorption, looking straight before him, and holding his head rather high. Nor was it possible to misconstrue the light in his eyes. He was the personification of a contented man, going whither he felt assurance of raising his contentment to ecstasy.

It was marvellous to see with what skill this man, ordinarily the perfection of clumsiness, found a safe path between the noses of the horses of the different cars which, at the crossing by the palace and the theatre San Carlo, hotly competed for his patronage. And it was equally wonderful that he could go at the pace he did, with so hot a sun in the heavens. But in truth James Pink had that within him which made him indifferent to externals. There was a fair portrait in his mind, which attracted all his energies, mental and physical, as a lodestone gathers to itself environing shreds of steel. And the god Cupid, who generally knows what he is about, though some hold him to be blind, protected him through all the dangers which encompassed him.

Where the road widened into a spacious public square, the lawyer abruptly turned west and left it. The sea was again before him, blue and radiant. Beyond was the white fringe of the myriad of houses which bind the Bay of Naples like a snowy marge of sand. And over the houses swelled Vesuvius, clear and entrancing on this bright day; methodically puffing its smoke toward the purple shadow of the island of Capri, a light sketch on the horizon. Closer at hand was to be seen the conventional furniture of a busy port; a maze of masts, with here and there a red or a black funnel in their midst; and a multitude of men and boys lounging against walls and railings, and the stout columns of granite sunk in the piers as convenient tether for the harbour

craft. There was uproar enough, in all conscience. All ports are noisy; but the tumult of the port of Naples may be called transcendent.

A hundred yards or so from the gate of the port there was a little white marble seat under a tree. The seat commanded a view of a low building, of a temporary kind, erected between it and the bay. In the doorway of this building, an orchestral organ was to be seen—and from the coloured posters outside it was evident that here was a show of a kind to be found alike in the cities of Europe and Timbuctoo. It was in fact a circus. From the organ loud harmonies proceeded forth upon the charmed air, and voluble were the rapturous comments of the Neapolitans who enjoyed this gratuitous diversion. The organ was not automatic. A large handle was turned with untiring energy by a woman fit to extort admiration from a traveller to whom no type of beauty is unknown. Such symmetry, lissomeness, and grace of movement! Long black hair! large unblinking eyes, worthy of the land they looked upon! The most bewitching complexion in the world! Teeth, mouth, nose, brow, and chin all conceived by nature as if she had worked by the light of the Book of Beauty!

James Pink sat on the marble seat and contemplated this lovely creature. Middle-aged man that he was, his heart beat as if it were disordered. You would have said he had a touch of palsy, if you could have seen the twitching of his mouth and fingers. And he winked again and again, as if the sun were in his eyes instead of held at a distance by the tree above him. After a time, our hero rose reluctantly, sighed, wiped his face with his silk pocket-handkerchief, and departed. He knew better than to shatter or risk the shattering of his ideal by an interview, until he was well prepared for the consequences, might they be ever so disastrous. But he was not, therefore, the less liberal in his praise. He lauded her loveliness and her figure until he was again at the portal of the *Hôtel Vesuve*.

It was really absurd to mark Miss Pink's conduct towards her brother during the remainder of that day. She was supercilious, deferential, tender, and commanding, each in succession. But all her moods were powerless to affect her brother. He was as little moved by them as if he had been a rock. His voice was strong and decided when he replied to her questions. And, moreover, Miss Pink was exasperated to find that he was sufficiently changed to be able to treat her with a certain amount of condescension. In effect, her brother behaved towards her as a political minister might behave to a small suitor who pestered him with demands in the midst of his business, but who had a certain claim upon him for civil treatment which he might not repudiate.

'I can bear this no longer, James,' said Maria in the evening, after dinner. She felt some terror lest her brother should go off again with a cigarette in his mouth. Had he repeated this iniquity, she was resolved to cause a scene, in public or private, it did not matter which. But no. With an air of philosophic abstraction that proclaimed his peace of mind, he had followed contentedly at her heels when she had left the table to retire to their private sitting-room. She

had thus the less cause for complaint. Yet she was too aggrieved to perceive this.

'What cannot you bear, Maria? Is not the service of the hotel good enough for you?'

'The service of the fiddlestick! You know that I am concerned about a very different matter. It is your own welfare, James, that is at stake: and, heaven knows, I have not watched over you from the time you were a helpless little babe—I mean, of course, when we were babes together—I say I have not been for twenty years in the position of guardian towards you, without acquiring a strict and conscientious estimate of my responsibility.'

'Yes, yes,' observed James Pink, as if he were, from a sense of duty, encouraging a diffident client to unbosom himself of his troubles.

'Be silent, James—with your Yes, Yeses!' exclaimed Miss Pink. 'I will not be interrupted! Who is she, I say? Tell me at once where I may find the creature, and put an end to the tragedy; for it is tragic, indeed, in its effect upon your heart, James, which I had come to regard as soft, tender, and humane.'

'Maria,' said James Pink benignly, when his sister paused, 'I do not admit that there is reason in your plea; but let that pass. The attachment is of the purest—the most Platonic kind. I have never stood within twenty paces of—of this divine being'—

'And yet you are fool enough to suppose she is one of Nature's beauties,' observed Miss Pink.

'It is my turn to cry "Be silent!" Maria,' replied James Pink. 'It is trifling with the highest, the noblest of human sentiments, thus to cast cold water upon the blossoms of hope. You shall see her for yourself, sister. That will assuage your enmity, if anything will.'

'I can quite believe it,' said Miss Pink. 'Nothing could please me more. The sooner the affair is ended, the sooner we shall return to our earlier and more comfortable condition as an affectionate brother and an affectionate sister, each anxious only to promote the other's happiness.'

'Hum!' murmured the lawyer, stroking his chin, and with, for the moment, a recurrence of the light in his eyes.

'Go to bed, James,' said Miss Pink abruptly; 'we have had enough excitement for one day.'

Without another word and with but a single kiss of salutation, James Pink took up a candle and went off to bed. He dreamed for eight hours of his fair one, and awoke the next morning still with exultation in his heart.

Miss Pink on her part sat and read for an hour and a half after she had wished her brother 'Good-night;' and retired confident that she had the reins of victory once again in her sinewy firm hands.

'Well!' she said, when they sat opposite to each other at breakfast again. 'I see, James, that you are still a little foolish. Let us get the illusion over without loss of time.'

'The illusion, indeed!' said James Pink indignantly. 'I am going there immediately after breakfast. If you choose you may accompany me.'

'I ask for nothing better,' remarked Miss Pink with emphasis. She straightway left the room, and, ere James had rid himself of the fears which came upon him with his sister's words of acquiescence in his impetuous proposal, she had returned,

bonneted and gloved, and carrying in her hand a red parasol with a long stout stick. Humbly, for anxiety oppressed him and a sense of approaching evil, James Pink left the hotel with his sister. They walked in silence. Ere long, the music of the distant orchestra was audible. James held his head up. 'Be patient, Maria,' he pleaded. 'We are nearly there.'

'I am glad to hear it,' was her reply. 'The sun is insufferable; and it is due to your absurdity that we are risking our lives beneath it.'

'And so this is your *innamorata*!' remarked Miss Pink when, at James's invitation, she had seated herself on the marble bench.

'Yes, I confess it; and I am proud of the attachment. It ennobles me,' said James.

Miss Pink put up her glasses, the better to view the action and countenance of the beautiful Italian; then she dropped them, and looked at her brother in a manner he will never forget. 'You must allow me to break my promise,' she said. She rose, approached the show, advanced into the vestibule, where stood the orchestra, the woman who received the money, the *siren* of the music herself. Disregarding the outstretched hand of the one woman who demanded the entrance fee, Miss Pink stepped up to the other woman, examined her closely, touched her, and turned away. 'You are certainly the most consummate fool on the face of the earth, James,' she said frigidly, when she rejoined her brother, who had hurried after her. 'You must take to spectacles: the creature is wax!'

THANKSGIVING DAY IN THE STATES.

'In acknowledgment of all that God has done for us as a nation, and to the end that, on an appointed day, the united prayers and praise of a grateful country may reach the Throne of Grace, I, — —, President of the United States, do hereby designate and set apart Thursday, the — day of November inst., as a day of Thanksgiving and Prayer, to be kept and observed throughout the land.' So runs in part and form the admonition which annually issues from the President to the people of the United States, and is echoed subsequently and more locally by the Governors of the various States to those under their immediate charge. The last Thursday in November is thus observed as a general holiday, a day of national Thanksgiving for the benefits and progress of the past year.

It is a beautiful institution; and round its observance cluster some of the sweetest memories of the past; while through it shines the deep religious instinct which lies beneath the superficial gloss of American social and commercial life. The day has been universally kept through many years, even in a more heartfelt manner and with more genuineness than Christmas; indeed, to certain sections of the nation, notably New England, it has always been the one great family festival of the year.

On the evening preceding the appointed day may be seen in most large cities, and also, though to a less extent, in most country villages, that

pleasant anticipatory activity and excitement that is witnessed in England only at Christmas-time. The merchant, silent and preoccupied in his office during the day, glances frequently with impatient inquiry at the slow-moving hands of the clock, as if, were it not for the evil example to his subordinates, he would gladly anticipate his customary hour for departure, and hurry home to a dwelling made bright by the charms of family life. The clerk behind the shop counter, though he knows that the general holiday will be a cause to detain him past his usual time, moves about his business, and supplies the wants of his unusual crowd of customers with an added cheeriness born of the heartfelt associations of the day. The office-boy as he sweeps out his domain whistles with especial shrillness and gaiety; and if his work is not so thoroughly done as usual, the sober, seedy book-keeper, as he puts on his overcoat, has his mind too full of the eager, happy little faces which will surround his humble board on the morrow to check the lad's exuberance or to chide his remissness.

The streets are filled with a noisy, pushing, bustling crowd; and many are the forms passing beneath the flaming gas jets laden with parcels whose shapes plainly betray their contents. The brilliantly lighted shops are crammed with customers inspecting, haggling, and pricing; but usually going out with a satisfaction and good-humour that are eminently shared by the shop-keeper.

And round the windows of the toyshops, gay with novelties, may often be seen a group which excites feelings of mingled pleasure and sadness: the children of the streets are there with their small arms burdened with the last editions of the evening papers, while they at intervals reluctantly break away to press upon the hurrying passengers, to return again in a moment with increased eagerness and more noisy criticism. Their faces betray nothing but the intensest enjoyment of the mere sight of pleasure they may not possess. How long will they keep their innocent unselfishness? or how soon will they learn to pass such sights with a bitter comparison or a jealous sneer? For there are despairing poor even in free America; and one may sometimes catch in the silence of the garret the faint sobbing murmur of the *Song of the Shirt* even in this land of liberty, crooned by those who are working from darkness to darkness in 'poverty, hunger, and dirt.'

But there are other and even more interesting figures in the scurrying tide of humanity. One may get a glimpse here and there of forms that wear the marks of a singular and sometimes a hard life, gazing about them with a look and a smile that are at once familiar and strange. Many are the changes which they probably note in their native city; and great is the difference in their eyes, accustomed to the sights and sounds of distant lands, between this noisy, whirling pandemonium and the quiet old town that has occupied one of the tenderest spots in their memory, as they tended the water-troughs in the Western mines, or rolled themselves in their blankets around the blazing pile in the clearing, with the strangeness of the forest all about them. For this is the time when the wanderers return, when those who have branched off into the world to make their own

way and to carry their own burdens come back to the old home, 'there to grow young and loving again among the endearing mementoes of childhood.' And so they pass on, each bent on his own destination, and filled with his own story, out of the windy street, with its flickering gas-light, into the lighted comfort of the home, or the barren destitution of the garret.

The picture of the celebration of Thanksgiving Day in an old New England household is one which it would be difficult to eclipse in its thorough simplicity, its genuine hospitality, and its sweet and loving communion between members of a family who have perhaps been separated during the past year. It fills the place, left vacant in the calendar, by the non-observance or the decreasing value in American eyes of the old English Christmas; and though it cannot have to English hearts the associations of the latter, unaccompanied as it is by the time-honoured holly and mistletoe and the ancient Yule-log, yet it has a peculiar individual interest of its own, which carries one irresistibly back to the times of the early colonists with their quaint garb and prim Puritan ways.

A short description of such a Thanksgiving so kept might not be unwelcome, and would serve to a certain degree as a type of what, unhappily, like our own Christmas, is fast retreating into the past, and what must eventually, under the harsh utilitarianism of modern times, eventually become entirely obsolete. The family was one which dates back to long before the Revolution, and many are the stories and legends which have been handed down of their early ancestors among the direct descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers; and great is the family pride which clusters about the consciousness of their ancient privileges. The old gentleman, one of the true type of native Americans, with something of the earnest, courageous, nonconformist spirit of the Puritans still lingering in his ageing frame, was full of reminiscences; and as he told the story of the Thanksgivings of his boyhood, and described with an eloquence born of emotion the country round Boston as he knew it then, one could appreciate that priceless possession of old age, a clear and undisturbed memory. The picture which he drew of the old homestead—now built over by rows of cheap lodging-houses, in one of the most thriving suburban districts of Boston—with the barns and the cattle; the brown orchard encircling the plain severity of the white house; the long approach through the fields; the old-fashioned garden, glowing with its last tribute to the Indian summer; the large well-swept kitchen, with its oaken settles and brick fireplace, and the long lines of brightly polished houseware—gave one a new insight into a long past age, connected only with the present through the medium of a few such venerable lives, fast tottering on to their last oblivion and well-earned rest.

The old lady, too, is one of the same worthy school; a kind, motherly, old dame, who, in her simple open-heartedness and genial activity, seems to cast a sort of halo of homely comfort around her, and carry a brisk air of cheeriness into all her relations with others. She was evidently disturbed in mind as to the fate of the Thanksgiving feast, and many were the bustling journeys she made to the kitchen to superintend

the actions of the hired girl, who, as she expressed it, 'could only cook these modern pastry fol-de-rols.'

And the event of the day, the Thanksgiving dinner, what a gorgeous spread was that! The old family table fairly creaked and groaned beneath the load of substantial dishes, as if its aged strength were taxed to the utmost by this unexpected revival of the past. The old family china and table-linen, too, reverently taken out of the oak-chest and divested of their wrappings and sprigs of lavender, were renovated for the occasion, and seemed to shine with enhanced gloss and brilliancy in appreciation of long-forgotten usages. The turkey, with its indispensable attribute, cranberry sauce, was basted to a delicious brown, and hissed and sizzled in its gravy as it was placed on the table. Its arrival was the signal for the solemn opening by the head of the house of the earthenware cider jug; and keen was the enjoyment depicted on the old gentleman's face as he sent the glasses, filled with the cool amber liquid, circling round the table. The chicken-pie, large and succulent, the various arrangements of squash, the three indispensable sorts of pie—'open-topped, cross-barred, and kivered'—all were there in their largest and most delicious forms; and the hospitable hostess seemed quite hurt, and apprehensive that all was not right, if exhausted nature refused to have more than twice of each dish. There she sat at the head of the table beaming warmth and comfort into every heart; only too happy if some one would pause in the general engrossment to remark on the excellence of some particular dish. Evidently the dinner was the event of the day with her; and after it was over, like Othello, her occupation was gone, and she rested, satisfied that her best had been well appreciated, and conscious of the placing of one more landmark on the highway of a long life.

Then in the evening, 'twixt the gloaming and the mirk,' we gathered round the great open fireplace, on which blazed and crackled a huge wood-fire—the collateral descendant of the Yule-log; and listened to more reminiscences from the old gentleman; while presently, after much urging and many protestations and nervous flutterings, the eldest daughter, as kind-hearted a soul as ever lived, not soured in mind by the non-fulfilment of all her youthful dreams, was induced to show somewhat of her ancient skill on the pianoforte. She assured us, with considerable embarrassment, that 'she really had not practised for several years, and would we please excuse all mistakes.' Being reassured, she turned to the instrument; and the discordant notes struck from its rickety interior seemed to fill the darkened room with a subdued and appropriate melody; and over the face of the old man there passed with the flickering firelight the chastened remembrance of years still more distant than those he had told us about, brought back by the jangling chords of the *Old Oaken Bucket*.

And so the evening wore away, with jests and stories among the elders, and music and innocent mirth among the younger ones, varied by the eating of 'phillipenas' and the 'pulling' of candy; until Thanksgiving Day was again with the past, and the party retired to pass through the intermediate land of slumber into another year;

which also will assuredly end in a Thanksgiving Day, but with what changes in the fireside circle, with what places vacant, or what others added, who can tell?

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE meeting of the British Association marks for us every year the progress of all the different branches of science, and enables those who have neither time nor inclination to study the 'proceedings' issued by our learned Societies, to form a general idea of what is going on in the professorial world. There were many excellent addresses in the various sections, and papers were read on a variety of subjects; and if their perusal should seem to suggest dullness, it is only because no very important discovery or invention has been brought forward during the past twelve months. Yet certain of the sectional addresses possessed both interest and novelty, and there is little doubt that this meeting at Newcastle has been in every way a success. The discussion on heredity evoked perhaps as much interest as any, and the appearance of Dr Nansen, of Greenland fame, naturally aroused a considerable amount of enthusiasm. The next meeting of the Association will take place in another great centre of human labour—namely, Leeds, and the year after, the Association will find its home at Cardiff.

If we are to believe the sanguine statements of a certain military writer in one of the French journals, the explosive called Melinite must far surpass all previous compounds which have been invented by man for the destruction of his fellows. Melinite, he tells us, is composed of melted picric acid; but its exact composition is a secret, which the Italian and German spies have in vain endeavoured to find out. The explosive has, since its invention some years back, been so perfected that it is absolutely safe. Only one accident from its use has occurred within the past three years, while during the same period other explosives have been responsible for a hundred terrible catastrophes. Melinite can be used for charging shells for field-artillery as well as for forts and siege-guns; and its behaviour upon impact is so terrible that the writer is constrained to ask: What will become of a fortification in face of this redoubtable agent? Some answer the question with a confession that such structures are doomed; others recommend the use of armoured circular forts, from the curved surface of which the deadly messengers will glance and do little harm.

Overhead wires and their dangers are a subject which regularly crops up in this country whenever a snowstorm of exceptional severity has laid low our telegraph lines. But the danger becomes of a far more serious character when such wires are charged with the powerful currents necessary for electric lighting. During a gale in an American town lately, several such wires were blown down, with the result that a number of men and horses were knocked over by electric shocks. Many of these unfortunates were insensible for a long time, and in some cases they have remained in a precarious state.

Her Majesty's ship *Sultan* is now lying in dock at Malta, and is undergoing a patching process,

so that she may be safely towed to England for more permanent repairs. It will be remembered that this vessel struck on a sunken rock in Comino Channel many months ago, and received such injuries that she subsequently sank in deep water. Her loss formed the subject of a long inquiry, and she was regarded as irrecoverable. But a firm of Italian engineers were more sanguine regarding the wrecked vessel than were their English confrères, and they made our government an offer to raise the vessel for a sum of fifty thousand pounds, which would represent about one-fifth of her original cost. By the exercise of wondrous patience and skill, they have been able to fulfil their contract, and have made, it is said, a profit of forty thousand pounds on the transaction. No one will feel inclined to grudge them this reward, which has been thoroughly well earned. But it would seem that a fresh inquiry is necessary with a view to find out why the work of recovery was left to foreigners.

In view of the many conflagrations which have occurred from lightning-struck oil-tanks in the petroleum regions of America, a new system of lightning-rods has been devised by Mr Charles F. Hill. This consists of several upright rods surrounding the tank to be protected, and supporting over the tank itself a roof of iron network. The poles themselves are crowned with the usual points; but a novel feature about them is that they are made of galvanised gas-pipe, and hollow from top to bottom. One object for this form of construction is, that water, from rain or dew, gathered in cups near their summits may be drained off to the earth below, so that a wet-earth contact is always secured. All who have studied the conditions under which a building can be best protected from lightning will at once recognise the importance of this provision.

A curious invention has lately been perfected by Professor Elihu Thompson. It consists of an electrical welding apparatus which can be moved along a railway or tram-line so as to weld the junctions of the rails wherever it may be desirable. To provide for expansion and contraction, a break would be left at every hundred feet. It is difficult to see the object of this joining-up of the rails, especially when we remember that when a rail comes fresh from the rolling-mill it is three times as long as is considered desirable, and is then and there cut into lengths. If there were any good end to be served by using the rail in its original length, surely it would not be cut into shorter pieces. To join these together again when the rail is placed in position seems to represent an unnecessary waste of labour.

A German consular Report has lately called attention to the value of banana fibre, which hitherto seems to have remained almost entirely unnoticed as a textile material. This fibre extends the entire length of the plant, and is not interrupted by the presence of lateral branches; it can be separated into threads as fine as silk, or into strings and ropes of great toughness. Indeed, in Central America this fibre, after being roughly dried, but without any further preparation, is used for shoe-strings and for ropes of all kinds. It is said that if the banana plantations of the entire tropical world were utilised as they ought to be, the markets would be flooded with a textile material that would quickly influence the

value and cultivation of such rivals as hemp, flax, cotton, and jute. The question naturally suggests itself: If all these anticipations of the value of banana fibre be true, why were not its many excellences discovered before? Perhaps, as with certain other plants, there is some difficulty in adapting machinery to prepare it for the market.

Some astonishment was a short time ago aroused by the report that a substance had been discovered which was three hundred times sweeter than sugar. This substance, *saccharine*, has since become a marketable commodity; and those who are curious enough to try its sweetening properties can obtain tabloids of it at most chemists' shops. Our French neighbours were quick to recognise it as a rival to beet sugar, and it speedily obtained a bad name which it does not deserve from their initiative. Our medical authorities regard it as a valuable remedy in certain diseases; and it seems to be used in somewhat large quantities in the preparation of fruits and liqueurs—at least we gather that that must be the case from the statement which is published, that in Germany alone so much saccharine has been made as to render five thousand tons of beet sugar superfluous. The sugar manufacturers are naturally anxious that this new coal-tar product should be regarded as a drug, and that its sale should be effected through chemists only. In other countries, the manufacture of saccharine is arousing the attention of the authorities, who possibly see in it a favourable subject for taxation.

An American inventor has proposed a plan for checking evaporation, in the case of fire-pails, which should always in case of emergency be kept full of water. His plan consists in covering the surface of the water with an air-tight sheet of tinfoil, which could readily be broken through by the hand when required. The suggestion is a good one in cases where pails are in use.

We are glad to hear that the Dairy School which was founded some time back at Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, and which represents one of the most important training-schools of the kind in the kingdom, is in a flourishing condition and is doing excellent work. It has been aided by a government grant, but still more by the generosity of Lady Ossington, who has placed the Holmes Farm at the disposal of its promoters. Here all the duties of a dairymaid are taught in a systematic way, so that the scheme may be looked upon as a successful attempt to develop female technical knowledge. The instruction in cheese-making at this school has had the direct effect of so improving the quality of cheese made in the district that the price of that commodity has risen from five to fifteen shillings per hundredweight. But it is clear that this improvement will not be of a merely local character, for the pupils, who average thirty in number, are drawn from all parts, and from such distant countries as Sweden, Africa, and Australia. The fees are moderate, and the School is supported by influential names.

The electric light is gradually pushing its way to the front, and we are inclined to believe in its advance, because its progress is so slow that it is the more likely to be sure. Ten years ago it was different, for then the introduction

of a form of electric lamp which has since turned out to be full of objections, caused the gas shares to run down in a few days to about half their previous value. It is improbable that this can ever occur again, for the public are now far better educated in matters electrical. We have always been of opinion that the gas companies have been wrongly advised in posing as rivals to the new light. It would have been a far wiser policy to become agents for it, for they already possess extensive powers, and have at hand all the machinery for dealing direct with the public. This union of gas and electrical interests has already been found to work well in America, and could not fail to succeed in this country. We are interested to see that the *Gas and Water Review* is persistently advocating this policy on the part of gas companies, and has adopted the sub-title, *Journal of Electric Lighting*, as a kind of guarantee of good faith in the matter.

An account has been published of a newly invented mask for the use of firemen, which contains a filter of porous material through which the wearer can breathe air that is supplied to him through a pipe which opens near the floor. A great many protective devices of this kind have been devised from time to time; but it is as well to remember that in cases of emergency there is nothing very much better than a wet blanket. This acts both as a defence against the flames and a filter for the smoke.

An extraordinary case of parental care is recorded by a correspondent of the *American Field*. He tells of having discovered in the corner of a park a quail's nest, from which the old bird would always fly away upon his approach, this bird being invariably the male. There were in the nest twelve eggs, and in due time they were hatched. The female bird was never seen either by the narrator of the story or by any of his men, who were on the spot every day; so that the presumption is that the female was killed soon after the eggs were laid, and that her mate thenceforward took charge of the nest and hatched out the young ones.

A curious method of cutting stone blocks has been perfected by M. Gay of Marseilles. It consists in the employment of an endless wire-cord, which is put in motion by a steam-engine, and which is fed with water and sharp sand. The cord is made up of three steel wires twisted to a certain pitch, and is not quite a quarter of an inch in diameter. It is evident that it can be carried to the stone blocks, and that several can be cut at the same time, provided only that the metal has time to cool between its work on two different stones. As the work goes on, there is a twist upon the cord which causes it to be worn down equally on every side until it gives way from sheer wear and tear. But this does not occur in a cord one hundred and fifty yards long until nearly five hundred square feet of surface have been cut through. The invention is not actually new, for it was awarded a prize at the Brussels Exhibition last year; but it has been much improved in various details.

In the *Journal of the Scottish Meteorological Society* there appears a most interesting paper by Mr Angus Rankin, entitled 'St Elmo's Fire on Ben Nevis,' from which it appears that this

phenomenon is occasionally seen on the mountain. In fact, fifteen appearances had been recorded up to the summer of last year. All these were nocturnal visitations; but probably only because the light given by the so-called fire is far too feeble to be observed during the hours of daylight. The display takes the form of jets of light on the summit of all objects which stand at any height above the general level of the roof of the observatory; and in exceptionally fine displays the tops of the objects are ablaze with the phenomenon, which then glows and hisses in tongues of blue and white, sometimes more than six inches in length. The observer, too, is affected if he stands on the roof of the building, for his hair, hat, and pencil are then all aglow; and if he raises his stick in the air, it is crowned with a long flame. The weather which precedes and follows these displays has marked characteristics, which are not peculiar to Ben Nevis, but affect the whole of Western Europe. We learn that the phenomenon has actually been photographed, St Elmo's fire appearing in the picture as three small tufts of white at the top of one of the chimneys connected with the observatory buildings.

The Employers' Time Recorder is an instrument which has been recently invented, and one which will be found valuable in all places of business where a large number of hands are engaged. It consists of a lever clock, above the dial of which are half-circles engraved with two rows of numerals, upon which are movable pointers. The object of the contrivance is to register every workman's number, the hour at which he arrives and that at which he leaves, in plain printed characters on a slip of paper, which can subsequently be transferred to the wages-book. The co-operation of the men themselves is necessary in this work, for they have to set the pointers at the hour of arrival or departure, and press a lever which makes the printed record; but in the majority of cases they will be only too glad to adopt a system so certain and so free from all cause for dispute. The working of the instrument occupies so little time that two hundred hands can be passed in ten minutes. The clock requires to be wound up once a week, and an inked roller attached to the machine requires occasional attention. The apparatus is constructed by Messrs Lincoln & Co. of Glasgow.

The old adage, which deals with the terrible uncertainty that must prevail 'when doctors disagree,' takes it for granted that all must go well when those learned gentlemen are of but one opinion. But sometimes even doctors are wrong when they are quite unanimous in their vote; witness a statement recently published by the *Belgian News* regarding the dangers of railway travelling. According to this authority, a document has been found in the archives of one of the Belgian railways which is a protest signed by nearly two thousand doctors pointing out the evils of what was at the time a new mode of locomotion. This wonderful document states that 'locomotion by means of any kind of steam-engine should be prohibited,' on the strange ground that rapid change of place 'cannot fail to produce among travellers the mental malady called *delirium furiosum*. But even if travellers consent to run such a risk, the State

ought to protect the spectators from catching the same disorder,' the plan recommended for accomplishing this end being the erection of a paling ten feet high on each side of the railway.

Various processes of sewage purification are in operation or are being proposed; but in every one of them the treatment takes place at the outfall station, thus allowing, unchecked, the formation of what are known as sewer gases on the route along which the sewage flows. Now, however, a method is proposed by Mr E. H. Reeves by which the sewage is, as it were, intercepted as it passes from the house-drains and at once dealt with. Mr Reeves deodorises the sewage as it is run into the sewers from the houses by placing in the sewer man-holes in the streets a small earthenware apparatus, containing in combination strong sulphuric acid and a solution of manganate of soda, which are automatically mixed, and give off sulphurous acid gas and nascent oxygen. Sulphurous acid gas completely destroys putrefactive and contagious organisms; while oxygen, as is well known, is a perfect deodoriser. The solution formed by the combination of the two chemicals overflows into the sewer from the chamber in which they are admixed, and deodorises the sewage on its way to the precipitating tanks. At the same time, whatever gases evolved from the sewage may escape to the outer atmosphere must pass through the chamber in which the chemical gases are generated, and are thus rendered innocuous. Mr Reeves' apparatus is in operation on a small scale at Putney, London; but his method has been extensively and successfully applied for some time at Frome, Somerset.

THE ORDEAL BY CHEWING RICE.

PROBABLY many people have heard of the Indian method of discovering a thief by the ordeal of chewing dried rice. We once saw it tried, and tried with success. It happened more than forty years ago; but as the custom of employing this ordeal has almost disappeared with the advance of civilisation and education in British India, we may be allowed to tell what we remember of it.

Four of us were living together in Calcutta, 'chumming,' as it is called out there. We were young men under twenty-five years of age, recently arrived from England, with fair earnings or salaries, and good prospects in our several professions. We lived in a fine three-storied house, in a large compound or garden, in the fashionable quarter of Calcutta. Amongst us we had a large retinue of servants—altogether about ten men apiece; so that the whole domestic establishment numbered some fifty persons.

One day there was an alarm that my friend George Christian's gold watch was missing. Search for it was made in vain; and we reluctantly arrived at the conclusion that it had been stolen. We held a domestic court of inquiry with the aid of the *moonshes* or native tutors who used to come to teach us the languages; but it was difficult to fix even a suspicion on any one. From the arrangement of our rooms in the house it seemed probable that one of Christian's own servants must have been the thief. But he indignantly repudiated this idea. He said that his servants were the best in the house, and would

never have robbed him, as he was so kind and liberal to them. We may observe that all of us were very confident of the integrity of our own private servants, as is the custom with most young men in India, until they have gained experience. We were almost jealous of one another as to which kept the best servants. We arrayed them in smart liveries, with silver badges in their turbans, and coloured waist-belts. My friend Christian had one remarkably good-looking *khidmudgar*, or table-servant, named Abdul, whom he considered the show-servant of our establishment, and he valued him accordingly.

As our domestic court of inquiry failed to detect the thief or to recover the property, one of our moonshees suggested that we should apply to the Calcutta police for the services of the native official who was then retained in the employ of government for conducting the process of detecting thieves by the ordeal of rice-chewing. It must be remembered that the Calcutta police itself was at the lowest stage of efficiency. It was feebly officered and badly manned. For the detection of thieves, especially in cases like ours, where domestics were suspected, they trusted to the services of a professor of magic.

The Pundit—as we shall call the professor—with two or three policemen escorting him, arrived at our house about eleven o'clock one morning. All our servants had been warned of the impending ordeal, and the lodge-keeper had been ordered to allow no one to go outside the gates. The Pundit was a tall and stout man, arrayed in muslin, and evidently possessed with a great idea of his own importance. According to his request, the servants were all seated in two rows on the ground in one of the long verandas of our house, and we took up our position so as to be able to superintend the operation. The Pundit's attendants then produced some pieces of green plantain-leaf, and a small portion was placed in each man's hands, to serve as a plate, on to which he was to eject the dried rice after he had successfully chewed it. The Pundit then went round with a bowl full of pounded rice, like flour, and with a wooden spoon poured a quantity of this rice-flour into the open mouth of each servant. The order was given that each man was, within five minutes by the watch, to chew the rice-flour and eject it, in a state of pulp, on to the plantain-leaf before him. Most of the men set to work with a will, though a few were rather frightened at first; but long before the five minutes had elapsed almost every man had got through the process, and held what may be called 'the evidence of his innocence' in his hands. But why are so many eyes turned towards one man, who sits back as if anxious to avoid observation? We also look, and there is Christian's favourite *khidmudgar*, Abdul, with his face almost convulsed, and trying in vain to get the rice-flour out of his mouth. His lips are dry, and his glands refuse to produce the saliva which is needed to moisten the rice-flour. At last the Pundit's eyes glare at him, and pointing at him with his long bony finger, he says solemnly: 'There is the thief.' The victim quails and grovels on the floor before him; his handsome face becomes livid with terror; and at last he faintly appeals to his master for forgiveness, and promises that he will restore the

watch. All the other servants are now talking as fast as they can, delighted at their own deliverance, and full of reverence and dread for the Pundit. The convicted thief slowly rises, and requesting his master to follow him, goes to the well in the garden, and produces the gold watch from under a loose brick.

The Pundit and his men were duly presented with a handsome reward, and the members of our household returned to their ordinary duties. Not quite so perhaps; for although the thief was not given up to the police, to be tried and punished by a magistrate, he was brought before the domestic tribunal, at which his master was president, and sentenced to receive twenty strokes from a rattan. The twenty strokes were presently administered by two of our most stalwart *syees*. After this, the culprit was readmitted into his master's favour, and became a much better servant than he had been before. Nor did his fellow-servants in the least object. They recognised the fact that he had expiated his guilt by the punishment that he had suffered, and they were not so uncharitable as to deny him a chance of regaining a good character.

A U T U M N.

Brown and bare are the Autumn fields;

Reaped and stacked is the yellow grain;

Hardly a partridge the stubble yields,

So closely shorn is the bristly plain.

Summer is dying 'mid shower and cloud,

Crimson and gold is his royal shroud.

Winter is coming; the leafy woods

Are withering fast in their golden pride;

For the wind is fierce, and the rain in floods

Is sweeping o'er valley and mountain side.

Dead leaves are flying through sun and shade,

A crimson carpet all down the glade.

Mute are the Finches, the Lark, and the Linnet;

Only the Robin sings loud and clear,

A song for the beauty and joy of Summer,

A sweet good-bye to the waning year.

Mead and valley and mountain steep

In misty silence are falling asleep.

But out of their sleep shall they one day waken,

And sparkle anew with pearl and gold,

When the rosy gates of Morn reopen,

And crown with splendour the dusky world.

Though the year die out amid cloud and rain,

Yet golden Summer shall come again.

B. G. JOHNS.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.

2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.

4th. Offerings of Verse should invariably be accompanied by a stamped and directed envelope.

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Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.